

Police Vol. 10.

A
LETTER
TO THE
PATRONS, TRUSTEES, &c.
OF THE
CHARITY-SCHOOLS:

Recommending a more efficacious Mode of
Educating the Children of the Poor.

*Deliver the Poor and Needy: rid them out of the Hand
of the Wicked.*

Psal. lxxxii. 4.

*For ye have the Poor with you always, and whensoever
ye will ye may do them Good.*

Mark xiv. 7.

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**TO THE
Patrons, Trustees, and Directors,
OF THE SEVERAL
CHARITY-SCHOOLS
In and about the CITY of LONDON.**

GENTLEMEN,

I TRUST there will appear a sufficient reason for addressing the following pages for your particular perusal, because the object they have in view more immediately concerns you, and the more likely, therefore, to meet with attention and excite inquiry at your hands, than if they had been merely published to the world, and, perhaps, passed over unnoticed and unknown; but that you will consequently wholly approve the design, I cannot, nor do I expect. I am well aware that objections will be raised against the plan I have proposed for the better regulation of

the Charity-Schools ; such as the danger and difficulty of making innovations in institutions of this kind, the additional expence the alteration will burthen each parish with, and the improbability of its being more beneficial, either to the objects themselves, or to the community ; but these I have endeavoured to obviate : and, I am confident, that to adopt such a mode of educating the children of the poor, will be productive of great advantages, not in idea, but in reality.

To remove a partial evil, or to correct publick abuses, requires but little trouble, and may be accomplished without much difficulty ; but to subvert a whole system, to remove prejudices, and to annihilate rules and orders, and forms and customs, much consideration is necessary to adopt such plans and designs as will better and more fully answer the intention of these establishments. Upon these principles I stand forward an advocate for these Schools ; and, although I am conscious of my inability to expatiate so largely on the subject as the nature of it will admit, yet I persuade myself,

myself, that what I have said will sufficiently shew the necessity of a reform, and the manner in which it may be effected.

Every one who has interested himself for the benefit of the Schools, and those who are equal well-wishers to them, will, I think, agree with me, when I say the present mode of educating the children does not answer that extensive purpose for which they were originally designed ; but that it does not, is no fault of the Trustees and Directors ; it is owing, in a great measure, to their confined and narrow circumstances, the low state of their finances, but principally to that licentiousness and dissipation which has made such inroads upon the morals of the people, and which is rapidly increasing through all ranks of mankind : it becomes, therefore, highly necessary to impress on the minds of youth who are to act in subordinate stations, a moral rectitude of conduct, and a due sense of the Christian religion.

But, before I recommend to your attention what measures to adopt that will most likely accomplish these ends, and the means to

to prosecute them for the public good, I will briefly lay before you the present state of the Schools, and the manner in which the children are employed.

These Schools consist of a certain number of boys and girls, who are either born or christened in their respective parishes, or whose parents have resided there for a great length of time: they are admitted into the Schools at an early age; the former are taught to read, write, &c. the latter, to read, write, sew, &c. they are instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, and furnished with such means of obtaining an honest livelihood (by being bound apprentices or to services) which their parents were unable to provide them with: they are subject to the rules and orders prescribed by the Trustees and Directors during their hours of attendance at the Schools, and under the immediate care of a Master and Mistress. We may naturally conclude, therefore, that while they are at School, their time is properly employed; but what becomes of their hours of vacation? and how are they spent? Look around the different parishes,

parishes, and, I fear, in many parts, there will exhibit a melancholy proof, in a variety of instances, that they are idly and unprofitably employed: how many of the children are to be seen lurking about the streets, acquiring habits of idleness, forming connections with the most profligate and abandoned part of mankind, and are initiated into every species of vice, at an age when they know not their danger, and before they can possibly have learnt the great difference between virtue and vice. These are alarming considerations, but they are facts too notorious.

Reflect for a moment on the unfortunate end of many of our youth, who have forfeited their lives to the injured laws of their country, and you will find, that the want of a religious education, and an early introduction into bad company, has been the principal cause of their ruin. How many very young men, nay, how many lads under twenty years of age, do we hear of every fessions condemned for death: they are, at an early age, sometimes from the connivance of their parents, and always from the examples

of their companions, initiated into the habit of picking pockets; in this they succeed for a while, and escape detection: and thus they are hurried from one vice to another, till the commission of some notorious crime, or the perpetration of murder, presents them to the bar of public justice; the horrors of a prison brings them to a sense of reflection on the career they have run in all manner of wickedness; the awful day that puts a period to their existence, and hurries them, with all their imperfections, to the tremendous bar of an angry God, presents to their imagination what is not to be described and scarcely conceived; they are conscious to themselves where has been their falling off, and, on the scaffold, do they not declare to the surrounding multitude, as an admonition, but, alas! with little effect, that an ignorance or a neglect of their religious duties have brought them to that untimely end. If, therefore, these poor wretches had been properly instructed in the knowledge and fear of God, it is probable they would have escaped such an unfortunate end, and have been more worthy members of society.

I am confident, that were the children of the poor taken that care of, which I have here submitted to your consideration, there would be less reason to complain that our criminal laws are too sanguinary, because there would be much less cause to enforce them. HANWAY, the well-known patron and friend to the poor, whose loss they, and all mankind, must ever lament, and HOWARD, that living monument of universal benevolence, both observe, as a reason why there are so few public executions in other parts of Europe, that the children of the peasantry are early instructed in the principles of their religion,

To enumerate all the evils attending these Schools in their present state, and their consequences to the children, would be engrossing too much of your time; I will only instance the following fact, as a further proof that they are not founded in chimera. About four years ago, a boy in one of the Schools, before the usual time of breaking up, asked the master's leave to go home, saying, his father wanted to send him upon an errand, and the master, having no reason to disbelieve

lieve what he said, complied with his request: the boy had no sooner accomplished his purpose, but he runs away to Iron-Gate, near the Tower, to bathe in the Thames with others of his companions; he had not been long in the water before he got so entangled between two barges, as to render every attempt to save him fruitless; he instantly sunk, and the body was not taken up for near two hours after the accident. In the mean time, his clothes were taken to the master, who was greatly alarmed, and immediately applied to the parents, but found them, alas! wholly ignorant of what had happened, and that the story told the master was untrue, designed only to answer the boy's own pleasure, which it pleased Providence to frustrate, as an example to the rest of the children. How then are such accidents to be prevented under the present establishment, and are not the children daily liable to some misfortune or other?

To obviate and remove such difficulties is, at present, impossible; I propose, therefore, as the only means to prevent them, to bring the children under one roof, and to support them

them altogether; this will be instituting a safe asylum for them, preserving them from such accidents as that before mentioned, protecting them against the snares and temptations they are now exposed to out of School hours, and conducting them safe through the devious paths of youth.

How many worthy and pious prelates of the present age, who have occasionally stood forward to plead the cause of these poor children, have lamented the want of a better provision for them, and have declared, that however careful and attentive you may be to preserve order and regularity in the Schools, and a proper obedience amongst the children, you will never eradicate the source from whence the evils complained of originate, unless you confine them to the house, and are subject to your direction and control.

But, to shew the necessity of such an institution in a still stronger point of view.— Many of these children are unfortunately situated, as to their parents; some there are, who, by getting their children admitted into

these Schools for a certain number of years, think they have discharged their duty to them; and so, as they are regular in their attendance at School, they regard not how their vacant hours are employed; they foolishly imagine they are to be taught every thing in these Schools that will enable them to take care of themselves and their families, without any other assistance or advice on their parts: others there are, who, from their own bad conduct and example, frustrate the very intention of their children's going to School, from the evil habits they acquire at home. We all know, that examples have more influence than precepts, and make stronger impressions on the mind; hence, the saying of SENECA: *Homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt, longum iter per præcepta, breve et effitius per exempla.* And we know, likewise, that bad ones inculcated, naturally subvert whatever good principles the mind may once be impressed with.

— It surely then requires the most sedulous attention to instill in their minds a proper sense of every religious duty, to inure them to labour and industry, without which, all else

they can learn will only serve to render them bad members of society; having gained some instruction in writing and reading, they can better effect whatever designs a bad parent may contrive and devise for them, or their own evil imaginations suggest. *to blust*
yellow eis syod nooneo bns ahig noei
 Such, and a variety of other ill consequences, may be prevented, by keeping and maintaining the children under one roof, and under the care of proper persons to superintend them; there to be taught the principles of the Christian religion, to form them good Christians, and initiated in the practice of handicraft trades, to make them serviceable to themselves and to the community.

noitsonbo odo rof bengob anou
miu koy abusf alaia KAYA *to ands* *anibis*

In the following account (which I have taken from that published annually by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge) you will see, that in some of these Schools part of the children are maintained and employed in their houses. In the parish of St. Ann's, Westminster, ten of the girls are taken into the house, and are maintained and employed there; and, when qualified,

put

put out to services in the parish of St. George's, Bloomsbury; sixteen of the eldest girls are maintained in like manner in the parish of St. John's, Southwark; fourteen of the girls are taken into the house in the parish of St. Paul's, Covent-Garden; fourteen girls and fourteen boys are wholly maintained and employed in the house in the parish of St. Sepulchre's; twenty-four of the eldest girls are boarded in the house to join to the British Charity Schools twelve girls; and twenty-eight boys are maintained in the house; the former are employed in household work, the latter in a manufactory, and, when of age, put out as apprentices. But, of all the charitable institutions designed for the education of poor children, that of RAYNE's stands yet unrivalled; this Charity was founded and endowed, at his sole expence, for the maintenance and education of forty poor girls, who are employed in the useful branches of housewifery, and, when of age, put out to services; but the liberality of the Founder does not cease here, it shines forth still more conspicuous; twice, in every year, those girls who have begun at services and are of a proper

proper age, draw lots for a marriage portion of one hundred pounds, which is given them upon the day of marriage by the Trustees, assembled for that purpose at the School-House; and that no improper use may be made of it, the Trustees are directed to inquire particularly into the characters of the intended husbands, and that they belong to the established church; and although it may and has been the misfortune of some of the young women to have drawn several times without success, yet they are always included in the number which draw the following year. What a wonderful instance is this of the charity, and benevolence of an individual! unparalleled in this, or any other country. How many living monuments has he raised to perpetuate his memory! and generations yet unborn will learn to bless the man who has provided them such a comfortable maintenance. Although a plan of this kind would far exceed the income of many of the Parish-Schools, yet to establish such places, where the children may be maintained and employed under one roof, is practicable; and surely the advantages

tages to be derived from them must appear self-evident. In order, therefore, to lessen the expence that would accrue from maintaining so great a number of children as at present occupy each School, I propose to reduce their number, as they grow up and leave the School, to one-half or three-fourths, according to the finances and circumstances of the Schools: but still there will be a sum of money wanting, in the first instance, to establish a proper place to receive them, and to furnish it with every necessary in the articles of beds, household-linen, furniture, &c. To defray these expences, we may surely apply to the opulent and well-disposed in the respective parishes, towards carrying into effect a work of such importance to society; and I am fully confident that, when once established, the expence of maintaining them would not exceed the income of most of the Schools.

It may probably be urged, as an objection, that to reduce the number in the manner proposed, many children will be totally deprived

deprived of receiving any education at all : and though this will eventually be the case, yet would it not be more expedient to lessen the number by degrees, than to discharge so many at once. In reforms of every kind, where an advantage is intended for the general good, to accomplish them with effect, some few individuals are often sufferers by the change ; but we must consider the community, and not the individual, *non nobis, sed omnibus*. Let it be remembered, however, that those children who remain in the School, and those that may in future be admitted on this plan, will certainly be much better instructed, and in a considerable less time than is at present required for their continuance at School ; consequently there will be oftener vacancies occurring : but it will have a further good effect ; such persons as are desirous of their children receiving the benefit of these institutions, will be careful to prepare them for admission ; for a preference should always be given to those who have taken some pains to qualify their children.

As it is not my intention to discharge any of the children on forming these institutions,

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a difficulty will probably arise in respect to those that remain, after taking a certain number into the house, which may be obviated in this manner: after selecting all the oldest children for the house, the rest should remain upon the old, that is, the present establishment, to be taken in according to seniority as vacancies may happen.

No child should be admitted into these Schools until he or she be eight years of age, nor continue in them longer than four years; for in this time they may, under attentive and experienced masters and mistresses, acquire every necessary instruction to form them good Christians, and be properly qualified to be placed out in manufactures, or in services, for not less than seven years.

In the apprenticing out the children, I cannot omit to recommend to your serious consideration this important concern, which involves their future welfare, but which has not been attended to with that circumspection, in some instances, as the nature of it requires. The characters of the intended masters

masters and mistresses cannot be too minutely examined, as to their conduct in life and their religious tenets: for want of this necessary inquiry, some children have been apprenticed to persons dissenting from the Church of England, contrary to the design of these institutions; so that all you have been doing to initiate these children in the principles of the Christian religion is done away and rendered of no effect: for, while they were under your care, they were taught to believe, that faith without works was dead; but, by such persons, they are assured, that faith (alone) in Christ will obtain them salvation, and though their sins be as red as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow.

The temper and disposition of the persons under whom they are to be placed, ought to be another object of your inquiry, as the following fact will plainly demonstrate.— A boy who had been regularly brought up in one of these Schools, and had left it at the usual time, with a character of an honest industrious lad, was apprenticed to a Glass-Cutter: during his month's probation, pre-

vious to being bound, there appeared nothing objectionable in the man's conduct towards the boy, but every thing seemed satisfactory to him, and he was accordingly bound for the term of seven years. The first week of his apprenticeship, he was set to work in a dark cold garret, without fire, and without a sufficient quantity of food to support him ; his master regularly attended him twice a day, to see that he performed the work he had given him to do, which he, with difficulty, had always completed ; and seeing the boy expert and active, he would, afterwards, set him an additional task to do in the night, and even this, the poor lad would sometimes finish ; but, for a continuance it was impossible ; tired nature required refreshment, and he would often fall asleep over his work ; but long he dared not indulge, the dreaded master's approach kept him on the watch : when, therefore, he failed in his work, this inhuman wretch would beat him in such a manner, as to disable him from working for several days. The poor boy bore all this without murmuring, or even complaining to his friends of the master's ill-treatment ; he supposed he was bound for seven

seven years, and till the expiration of that period, he could not be released from his service. A length of time passed in this manner, while the man,—no ;—I will not disgrace humanity by calling him a man,—rather, this callous wretch ! would refuse the parents admission to see the boy ; saying, he was too busy to be spoke with, or, that he had sent him out upon business. It happened, however, that the boy's cries reached the ears of some neighbours, who, knowing the disposition of the master, communicated their suspicions to the parents ; they immediately applied to see their son, and met with the same repulse as before ; they determined, however, not to quit the shop till they had seen him, and inquired into the truth of what had been reported to them. Here my hand recoils, as it were, and involuntarily pursues a narration so shocking to human nature !—The poor lad was at length called down, but so disfigured by bruises, and emaciated for want of proper sustenance, they scarcely knew their own child : he was taken away, and the parents were directed to apply to some magistrate to cancel the indentures, who discharged him from the service

service of such an unfeeling wretch!—Poor satisfaction to the boy for the injuries he had received; yet it was a consolation to be released from such a tyrant.

If this was the only reason why you should be cautious to whom you apprentice the children, it would surely be sufficient; but they have other claims upon you. Are we not all the children of one common Parent, sojourners alike through a state of probation? and has not Christ strictly enjoined us to take care of our poor ignorant brethren? As I have stated to you the sad consequences arising from placing these children under improper masters, I will now endeavour to shew what will be the probable effects of apprenticing them to persons of good character. We will consider a youth brought up under your care, as placed to some honest industrious mechanic an apprentice for seven years; the master, on the one hand, consulting the boy's happiness and improvement, and, on the other, the boy studying to promote his master's interest by assiduity and application: consider him as having passed a faithful service of seven years, and applying to you for his

his indentures, his master also attending to testify to his good conduct, and addressing himself to you in some such terms as these.—

“ Gentlemen, the education I have received
 “ at your hands, and the care you have
 “ taken to place me out in the world, has
 “ enabled me to pass through my appren-
 “ ticeship with pleasure and comfort to my-
 “ self, and with satisfaction to this worthy
 “ man (his master). It has afforded me the
 “ means of providing a comfortable liveli-
 “ hood, not only for myself, but for an
 “ aged and afflicted parent, who would pro-
 “ bably, but for my assistance, have sunk
 “ under the pressure of disease, his declining
 “ years have been neglected and forgotten,
 “ and the hopes he had entertained of his
 “ latter days being made comfortable have
 “ perished! Our daily prayers shall be
 “ offered up, as a memorial before God, of
 “ our gratitude to you, praying, that you
 “ may not in due time fail of your reward.”

In the appointment of proper persons to superintend these children, much care and attention is necessary on your part: for on this, the proposed alteration, and the benefits

to

to be derived from it, in a great measure depend. Persons whose characters in life have been uniformly consistent with the established church, those remarked for their sobriety, and of a temper and disposition suited to form the minds of young children, and "mould the heart to virtue," are the most likely to effectuate every good purpose that can be desired. The whole of their time should be employed for the service of these children, that they may early impress on their minds, the duties which religion and their subordinate situation require, and accustom them to habits of industry. The great and learned BACON, who had long studied the nature of man, and who well knew the frailty of the human heart, observes, that *men's thoughts are according to their inclinations, their discourse and speech according to their learning and infused opinions, but their deeds are as they have been accustomed*: and what is education, as the same author further observes, but an early custom, "*a teneris annis imbibita confuetudo.*" You must see then the necessity of early instruction of "teaching the young idea how to shoot," while the human mind is in a state to receive those impressions;

impressions; and if they are not inculcated at that period, these children, as I have before related, will be exposed to numberless temptations, and become a disgrace rather than a service to society.

I cannot too frequently urge the necessity of your application to establish such a system of education, and of your constant attendance to see that your rules and orders are strictly obeyed; for, in the formation of all societies, without a determined resolution and perseverance, and an unanimity amongst the persons undertaking them, no good purpose can ever be accomplished. I trust, however, in this instance, no one will be found wanting to set on foot, and further the progress of establishments founded on the principles of humanity, and which involve in them the cause of our poor brethren.

With respect to the religious exercises, their reading and writing, and the different manufactories which these children may be employed in, they must be left entirely to your management, because they may be varied as occasions require. I must, however,

object to one part of the business that employs the time of some of the children, from being any longer continued, I mean the absurd custom of learning them to sing hymns and anthems for particular days; it seems a very unnecessary part of their education, and can answer no good purpose whatever: on the contrary, it excites an ambition in the rest of the children to become singers, and, I am persuaded, you well know the ill consequences that too often attend good singers; how often do they sacrifice their health and their fortunes to the entertainment of their friends; their company is much solicited, the flattering compliments they receive, heightens their vanity, and that time is spent in studying new songs, which might have been devoted to some more useful employment: what must then be the effects of this dangerous pursuit among the lower orders of the people, but utter ruin to themselves and families. Abolish, therefore, so ridiculous a custom, and when it is necessary that the children should sing upon anniversary-days and other public occasions, let the whole of them join in proper hymns or psalms, without any preference or distinction

distinction among those who may have the best voices.

It will be urged, perhaps, and I am sorry to acknowledge there is too much truth in the observation, that many people who attend and contribute upon these occasions, are excited thither by some favourite singer, who is employed for these purposes; if, however, it be necessary towards obtaining a large collection, to adopt such measures, although it may not be so advantageous to the Charity, it will surely be more decent to invite the choristers of St. Paul's or Westminster upon these particular days; for I do abhor the idea of introducing into the churches, public stage singers, to sing psalms or hymns adapted to the airs of some favorite songs.

I have endeavoured to give you some idea of the present state of the Schools, and the mode of educating the children; and, I hope, from what has been proposed, you will see the necessity of forming them upon different establishments. To convey religious instruction to the lower classes of the people,

people, embraces many great advantages: it is surely then the duty of every man, as a Christian and a Citizen, to extend them for the benefit of society, by promoting Christianity, and supplying the manufacturers of this country with able and useful artificers. It is to you, whose active zeal in supporting these Schools has been most conspicuous, that I make this appeal, not doubting but the same unwearied assiduity will actuate you in the present instance, to forward and promote these institutions: how far your endeavours may be successful, no human power can divine; you can only endeavour to effect such purposes which shall merit and deserve success.

I have already observed, that to carry these good intentions effectually into execution, the contributions of your benevolent and opulent neighbours will be required, to aid and assist you in the first stage of the business; and, surely, every one who is able, would cheerfully and liberally contribute towards so useful and laudable a design.

Whatever

Whatever may be the event of these pages, and however men's opinions may differ, as to the object of them, the utility, and I will venture to add, the practicability of such institutions is too evident to be controverted; but should they be only cursorily considered, without any view to adopt the means prescribed, I shall, nevertheless, receive some satisfaction to myself in having endeavoured to excite an inquiry into the state of the Schools, and pointing out a better mode for educating the children, for their benefit and for the benefit of society.

I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Yours, &c.

F I N I S.

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Yours etc

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